reduction of staff strength in the Office of the DGFT (earlier known as Chief Controller of Imports & Exports). Based on the recommendations of the Committee, the posts identified as surplus are to be abolished in phases.

Growth in Trade and Commerce with Bangladesh and Myanmar

2022. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that trade and commerce of India with Bangladesh and Myanmar has been witnessing steady growth; and

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the items and quantity that comprised most of the imports of Bangladesh and Myanmar from India and vice-versa, year-wise since 1990-91?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Information as requested would be voluminous. These details are available in the publications statistics of the Foreign Trade of India by Countries, Volume I and Volume II Annual Numbers from 1990-91 onward, copies of which are available in the Parliament Library.

Export Potential Areas in Middle-East, African and CIS countries

2023. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some areas of Middle-East, African countries and CIS countries which offer export potential for the country are still unidentified;

(b) what action Government propose to take to identify such export potential areas in order to increase the country's exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Norms for Value Based Advance Import Licences

2024. SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH MANN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of new norms specified for value-based advance import licences and the restructuring of the International Price Reimbursement Scheme (IPRS) to help boost exports;

(b) whether Government will also initiate steps to improve quality assurance, standardization of items to international norms; details thereof; and

(c) steps being taken to promote export-promoters from the private sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) Details of new norms, including value based norms are contained in the Hand Book of Procedures (Vol. II) for April 1992-March 1997 (As amended upto 31.3.1994) published on 1.4.1994. Thereafter new norms have been notified through various public notices.

Details relating to new scheme called Engineering Products Export (Replenishment of Iron and Steel Intermediate) Scheme in lieu of IPRS has been notified vide a Notification No. 53/(RE)/92-97 dated 1.3.1995 issued by Ministry of Commerce, copies of which are available in the Parliament Library.

It is the policy of the Government to encourage and support the efforts for attainment of internationally accepted quality norms. Exporters of products with ISO 9000(series) or the BIS 14000 (series) certification are granted freely tranferable Special Import Licence at a fixed percentage of the FOB value of exports. The details of this scheme are contained in Chapter XIV of EXIM

Policy 1992-97 and Hand Book of Procedures Vol-I.

Various schemes under EXIM Policy have been formulated to promote exports from all sectors including private sector in order to stimulate India's exports capabilities by facilitating access to required raw materials and capital goods at internationally competitive prices.

Exports Suffering due to Lack of Infrastructural Facilities

2025. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) has recently informed Government that exports were suffering due to lack of infrastructural facilities and their poor upkeep, as per the report in the 'Hindustan Times' dated 28th February, 1995 captioned "poor infrastructure hits exports: FIEO";

(b) if so, the facts in this regard; and

(c) what action Government propose to take in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) At the Board of Trade Meeting held on 24th Feb., 1995 under the Chairmanship of Commerce Minister, the Federation of Indian Export Organisations submitted a set of suggestions including the need for strengthening physical infrastructure. The areas in which improvement has been sought are power, transportation & communication.

(c) Government has initiated several steps for infrastructure development in the country as also for better upkeep of existing infrastructure facilities. Private sector participation is being encouraged in infrastructure development activities. This Ministry regularly hold meetings of Standing Committee on Promotion of Exports by Air & Shipping (SCOPE-AIR and SCOPE-SHIPPING) to address issues concerning export infrastructure. A Centrally Sponsored Export Promotion Industrial Parks Scheme has also been formulated to assist states in creating efficient infrastructure for Export-Production.

Quotas Imposed by World Trade Organisation

2026. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have issued notification conceding World Trade Organisation's right to impose quotas on garments and textile clothings of the country;

(b) if so, whether the system itself from abroad has caused damages to Indian exporters; and

(c) if so, the facts and details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Recommendations by Extreme Focus Groups

2027. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the recommendations made by the 34 extreme focus groups for suggesting measures to boost exports had not been accepted by Government; and

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government have now decided to review these recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) No, Sir, the Action plan included the major recommendations made by the Groups on 'Extreme Focus Products' identified by the Board of Trade, Ministry of Commerce.